

TAKE PLACE

Hotel on North

The depth of story in the Hotel on North surprised and delighted me. The independent, boutique lodging in Pittsfield, Massachusetts' revitalizing downtown opened last year and serves the hosts of cultural and nature tourists who visit the Berkshires every summer.

The floors tell the story of the hotel's former lives as manufacturing space, men's clothier, sporting-goods store, and white-collar offices. In the upper stories where 45 uniquely appointed guest rooms lie, a major architectural feature makes the overall space: a soaring, skylit atrium that reaches down through the third floor, opening a view to a lounge with comfortable seating and bookshelves on the second. Each view of the space catches the eye: a wall display of openly kitsch television lamps in one direction, a glimpse of a reproduction Greek statue in the other. I was unsurprised that the Hotel on North recently earned a nod as one of *Architectural Digest's* favorite new hotels of 2015.

The rooms are spacious and restoratively simple, decorated with a mix of custom furniture and fixtures along with antique-store finds. The bedside alarm clocks are astoundingly basic: analog, even nostalgic. There are outlets everywhere, but not ugly-making. The free wifi is backed by a fiber-optic link. There are small glass jars of pre-measured Barrington Coffee for the in-room, coffee-snob-grade drip coffee makers. The bathrooms boast Beekman toiletries, many incorporating goat's milk from the region. One room claims a claw-foot tub. Another boasts a fireplace with a timber from the old building burnished into a mantle. It was the



mini-bar that really got me, containing as it did a bottle of gin and tonic from Berkshire Mountain Distillery. There are also subtle jokes: in one room's bathroom, hung like a commemorative plate, rests an ornately painted ceramic lid ... of a chamber pot.

One of the big stories at Hotel on North is the food and drink to be found in its restaurant, Eat at North. Operated by the same company that sustains the Berkshire's renowned Red Lion Inn, Eat at North echoes the hotel's industrial chic with its enormous and beautiful zinc bar serving fresh oysters. As befits the region the menu is new American comfort food, highly seasonal and locally sourced. There are ample wines by the glass, carafe, or bottle, and a panoply of local beers. One of the house cocktails is the barrel-aged Man About Town, a mix of Berkshire Mountain bourbon, Campari, and Carpano Antica. Oh, there's also cold-brew coffee on tap.

As befits a boutique hotel, it is connected to an actual boutique: Dory & Ginger. Its large glass storefront looks into a carefully curated selection of decorative goods, jewelry, accessories, kitchen and barware, print items, and the like. "Dory" is Laurie Tierney, who also owns the hotel with husband David Tierney. They see their investment as part of writing a new story for Pittsfield itself.

—David C. Brock

hotelonnorth.com

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